

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 120622Z JAN 77

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2896

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 0 0 4 4

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SCUL, UR

SUBJ: DISSIDENT REACTIONS TO RECENT CRACK-DOWNS

1. SUMMARY: LENINGRAD DISSIDENTS HAVE BEEN REACTING VIGOROUSLY TO RECENT CRACK-DOWNS WHICH THEY RELATE TO A NATION-WIDE CAMPAIGN TO CONTROL LEVEL OF DISSENT PRIOR TO BELGRADE CSCE CONFERENCE. IN PARTICULAR, APPEALS RECENTLY HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED ON BEHALF OF VOSZNESENSKAYA AND SVERDLIN. END SUMMARY.

2. LOCAL DISSIDENTS WITH WHOM WE RECENTLY HAVE SPOKEN TEND TO RELATE TIMING OF VOSZNESENSKAYA AND LEVIN ARRESTS TO A GENERAL NATION-WIDE CRACK-DOWN ON CSCE RELATED GROUPS ALREADY REPORTED IN DETAIL BY MOSCOW (MOSCOW 0362), ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE THAT VOSZNESENSKAYA'S ARREST AND TRIAL WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME IN ANY CASE. BOTH VOSZNESENSKAYA AND LEVIN REPORTEDLY ARE MEMBERS OF SMALL LENINGRAD CSCE MONITORING GROUP CONNECTED TO ORLOV GROUP IN MOSCOW. AS LEADER AMONG LENINGRAD'S RUSSIAN "DEMOCRATS", VOSZNESENSKAYA HAS BEEN UNDER VERY CLOSE POLICE SURVEILLANCE AT LEAST SINCE SHE PLAYED KEY ROLE IN 1975 DECEMBRIST UP-RISING DEMONSTRATION IN DECEMBER SQUARE. ACCORDING TO BIO-GRAPHY WHICH CURRENTLY CIRCULATING LOCALLY AS PART OF EFFORT
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PUBLICIZE HER CASE AS BROADLY AS POSSIBLE, SHE WAS ARRESTED FOUR TIMES IN 1976 AND HER APARTMENT WAS SEARCHED SIX TIMES IN THAT PERIOD BECAUSE OF HER EFFORTS PROMOTE "SECOND CULTURE" IN LENINGRAD BY SEEKING PUBLICATION NON-CONFORMIST MANUSCRIPTS AND PROMOTING DISSIDENT ART EXHIBITONS. BIOGRAPHY CONFIRMS SHE WAS INDICTED WITH SLOGAN PAINTERS BUT STATES CHARGES NOW DROPPED FOR "LACK OF EVIDENCE". IT ADDS THAT

LATEST ARREST AND CONVICTION WAS FOR "COMPOSING AND SPREADING SLANDEROUS LITERATURE ABOUT SOVIET WAY OF LIFE" BUT BIOGRAPHY DOES NOT SPECIFY PRECISELY WHAT LITERATURE WAS INVOLVED.

3. MEANWHILE, PETITION IS ALSO CURRENTLY CIRCULATING IN REFUSENIK CIRCLES ON BEHALF OF SVERDLIN, WHO CHARGED WITH "PARASITISM" AS WELL AS "HOOLIGANISM". IT STATES SVERDLIN IS SUBJECT PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF JEWISH ACTIVITIES AND HIS DESIRE TO EMIGRATE AND CALLS ON "WORLD PUBLIC OPINION" TO REACT BEFORE SENTENCE IS PASSED.

4. CONOFF ALSO HAD OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO ILYA LEVIN JAN 7 UPON HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON. LEVIN, CHAIN SMOKING AND BADLY SHAKEN, SEEMED MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER DISCUSS DISSIDENT SCENE, PERHAPS REFLECTING CURRENT FEELING AMONG DISSIDENTS THAT BEST REACTION TO CURRENT CRACKDOWN IS NOT TO KNUCKLE UNDER BUT TO PUBLICIZE THEIR CAUSE TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE.

5. RE LENINGRAD DISSIDENT VLADIMIR BORISOV (MOSCOW 0256) LEVIN HAD ALSO HEARD THAT HE WAS FOUND SANE AND TO CONFIRM FACT, HE CALLED BORISOV'S MOTHER IN PRESENCE CONOFF. MOTHER SAID "SOME" DOCTORS HAVE FOUND HIM SANE, BUT THAT HE IS STILL INSIDE WAITING FOR COMPLETION OF A LABOR COMMISSION TO DETERMINE WHETHER HE CAN HAVE A JOB. ACCORDING TO LEVIN, BORISOV, WHO CONNECTED TO SAKHAROV, HAS HAD PAST HISTORY OF SCHIZOPHRENIA WHICH AUTHORITIES NOW EXPLOITING BUT IS NOT PSYCHOLOGICALLY DISTURBED.

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6. COMMENT: LEVIN RELATES RECENT CRACK-DOWN TO NATION-WIDE EFFORT SILENCE SOVIET DISSIDENTS WELL IN ADVANCE OF BELGRADE CSCE FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE. HE BELIEVES THAT GOAL IS NOT TO COMPLETELY SILENCE DISSIDENTS SINCE THIS WOULD RESULT IN HEAVY REACTION ABROAD, BUT RATHER TO HOLD IT TO A CONTROLLABLE LEVEL. THOROUGHNESS OF SEARCHES ALSO INDICATES DESIRE TO SOAK UP AS MUCH MATERIAL AS POSSIBLE BEFORE IT HAS POSSIBILITY TO CIRCULATE INTERNALLY AND ESPECIALLY ABROAD. LEVIN, ALTHOUGH HIMSELF MAINLY IDENTIFIED WITH LENINGRAD'S "DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT" CHARACTERIZED THIS GROUP--AS EXEMPLIFIED BY VOSZNESENSKAYA--AS BASICALLY NAIVE AND "BABES IN THE WOOD", COMPARED TO SOPHISTICATED MOSCOW "DEMOCRATIC" MOVEMENT. HE COMPLAINED THAT WITH EXCEPTION FEW ACTIVISTS, LENINGRAD "DEMOCRATS" PRONE TO WANT TO WALK FUDGY IDEALISTIC LINE "ABOVE POLITICS" AND RELUCTANT TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES PUBLICLY WITH KIND OF HARD POLITICAL POSITIONS WHICH NECESSARY TO GIVE REAL CREDIBILITY AND STRENGTH TO THEIR ACTIVITY.
NEUBERT

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